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Reference FR020701	Application No./Patent No. 02751562.6 - 2412 PCT/IB0203181
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Entry into the European phase before the European Patent Office

These notes describe the procedural steps required for entry into the European phase before the European Patent Office (EPO). You are advised to read them carefully: failure to take the necessary action in time can lead to your application being deemed withdrawn.

1. The above-mentioned international patent application has been given European application No. 02751562.6.
2. Applicants without a residence or their principal place of business in an EPC contracting state may themselves initiate European processing of their international applications, provided they do so before expiry of the 31st month from the priority date (see also point 6 below).

During the European phase before the EPO as designated or elected Office, however, such applicants must be represented by a professional representative (Arts. 133(2) and 134(1), EPC).

Procedural acts performed after expiry of the 31st month by a professional representative who acts during the international phase but is not authorised to act before the EPO have no legal effect and therefore lead to loss of rights.

Please note that a professional representative authorised to act before the EPO and who acts for the applicant during the international phase does not automatically become the representative for the European phase. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to appoint in good time any representative they wish to initiate the European phase for them; otherwise, the EPO has to send all communications direct to the applicant.

3. Applicants with a residence or their principal place of business in an EPC contracting state are not obliged to appoint, for the European phase before the EPO as designated or elected Office, a professional representative authorised to act before the EPO. However, in view of the complexity of the procedure it is recommended that they do so.
4. Applicants and professional representatives are also strongly advised to initiate the European phase using EPO Form 1200 (available free of charge from the EPO). This however is not compulsory.